



Nonprofit Human Services Cabinet

Appropriations Committee Hearing on the Human Services Budget February 17, 2012

Catholic Charities,
Archdiocese of Hartford

Children's League of
Connecticut

Connecticut AIDS
Resource Coalition

Connecticut Association
for Community Action

Connecticut Association
for Human Services

Connecticut Association
of Area Agencies on
Aging

Connecticut Association
of Nonprofits

Connecticut Coalition
Against Domestic
Violence

Connecticut Coalition to
End Homelessness

Connecticut Community
Providers Association

Connecticut Consortium
of Legal Services

Connecticut Council of
Family Service Agencies

Connecticut Sexual
Assault Crisis Services

Connecticut Women's
Consortium

End Hunger
Connecticut!

Mental Health
Association of
Connecticut

Oak Hill

Planned Parenthood of
Southern New England

The Connection, Inc.

Wheeler Clinic

My name is Lucy Nolan and I am the Executive Director of End Hunger CT! and co-chair of the CT Nonprofit Human Services Cabinet. The Cabinet is a statewide coalition comprised of 20 nonprofit human service associations and organizations representing approximately 800 providers. Our mission is to advance a strong and unified nonprofit human services system to effectively meet community needs.

We represent the state's safety net. Our members' services help prevent devastating social problems such as hunger, homelessness and violence. We provide lifesaving assistance to individuals with developmental disabilities, mental illness and addictions. Nonprofit human service providers employ a significant portion of the state's workforce. Cuts to nonprofit health and human services not only result in utilization of more costly alternatives (e.g.: emergency rooms, prisons), but they also result in job loss and further harm to the state's economy.

The Cabinet would like to thank Governor Malloy of the inclusion of a 1% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) effective January 1, 2013 in his FY13 budget adjustment recommendations. As you know, nonprofit human services providers that contract with the state to provide services on its behalf have not received of COLA since July 2008 with the 20 year average COLA being just 1%. We urge the Committee to maintain the Governor's proposed 1% COLA but ask that you consider making it effective July 1, 2012 instead of January 1, 2013 so that providers can benefit from a full 1% COLA in FY13.

Difficult economic times have resulted in increased demand and consumers presenting with more acute needs. The cost of providing services has also risen significantly in recent years and each year that goes by without a COLA or increase in fee-for-service rates is just another year that providers fall behind. Nonprofit human services providers have been forced to reduce employee benefits, leave positions vacant and cut staff as they look for ways to do more with less and ensure that the need in their community is met. The safety net these agencies provide is frayed and the state's economy continues to be harmed by underfunding of nonprofit human services providers.

The Cabinet supports the Governor's proposals to increase supportive housing and Rental Assistance Program (RAP) certificates. Permanent supportive housing is the most successful model for eradicating homelessness among those experiencing long-term homelessness and those with disabilities, such as HIV/AIDS or mental illness. Targeted supportive housing has had a dramatic effect on the number of chronically homeless people cycling in and out of public institutions. Additionally, housing subsidies, such as RAP certificates, are the primary tool for preventing and ending episodic and family homelessness.

Again, we ask that the Committee maintain the Governor's proposed 1% COLA and ask that you consider making it effective July 1, 2012. We thank the Committee for its efforts in recent years to avoid balancing the budget on the backs of the poor and we will remain supportive of these efforts in any way possible. Nonprofit human services providers are critical partners with the state in the delivery of essential health and human services. The Cabinet urges the Committee to protect funding for our organizations so that we are able to continue partnering with the state to meet the needs of Connecticut's families.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

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